

CONFERÊNCIA INAUGURAL:

On the Uses of Events in Linguistic Semantics*

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I. Events in Davidson (1967) and Montague (1967)

M: *t rises (x, t)* (generic)
rising (P, x) (individual)

D: *rises (x, e)* (individual)
ê rises (x, e) (generic)

In M events are first of all generic, the individuals being posited separately. In D we locate the event reference in the stem, so that nominalization is transparent; also, generic events are constructed by abstraction over individual *e*.

II. Simple uses

- (1) John walked slowly (simple modification by θ -identification)
- (2) John ususally walks to work (quantification over E)
- (3) walk(*e*) & Actor (*x, e*) & slow(*e*)
- (4) [Usually *e*: C(*e*)] walk to work(John *e*)

Note that interactions are possible:

John enjoys [usually walking to work]
so John's usually walking to work is itself a state of John.

III. Manner and Thematic adverbials

- (5) Mary quickly objected (ambiguous)
- (6) Mary was quick [PRO to object]
- (7) $LxLe$ objected(x, e)
- (8) $LxLe$ objected(x, e) & quick(e)
- (9) (Ee) (Ee') [quick(Mary, e', e) & object(Mary, e')]
- (10) quickly: $LxLeLe'$ quick(x, e', e)
objected: $LyLe''$ object(y, e'')
quickly objected: $LxLeLe'$ (quick(x, e', e) & object(x, e'))

The thematic adverb functions as the (semantic) head of the construction, but is also a modifier in the sense that it presupposes the truth of what it θ -marks. The adjective behaves similarly in nominalizations:

- (11) Mary was quick with her objection
- (12) Mary's quick objection (was appreciated by everyone)

IV. Syntactic Constraints

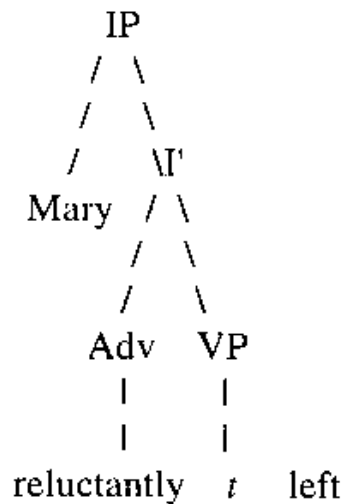
Following Bowers (1993) we locate positions for appropriate adverbs; C, I, and V:

- (13) John learned French clearly
- (14) Clearly, John learned French
- (15) John clearly learned French

The adverb is assumed in each case to θ -mark its sister. There can be "double" θ -marking (assuming VP-internal subjects):

- (16) Mary was reluctant [PRO to leave]
- (17) Mary reluctantly left

(18)



(19) Reluctant(Mary_i, λx_1 left, e)

In the cases *t* has, as one might say, the interpretation of PRO. The overt subject is always available for θ -marking:

(20) Mary was reluctantly instructed *t* (by Joan)

(21) Joan reluctantly instructed Mary

Austin's minimal pair:

(22) Clumsily, he trod on the snail

(23) He trod on the snail clumsily

IV. Telicity

(24) John will run in an hour

(25) The patient walked in an hour

(26) The patient died in an hour

(27) John solved the problem in an hour

Telics involve *two* events, process and telos; both are visible to the semantics.

(28) Mary drew a circle in/for an hour

(29) Mary drew circles in/for an hour

(30) Mary drew John's face for an hour

Telic interpretations occur where "forced" to do so, and not otherwise (see Verkuyl (1993)). We might locate the atelicity in the "plural" reading of the sentence, perhaps confined to V, as in the "over and over" readings. The example below is only apparently a counterexample, since QR replaces the quantifier by a variable, and the telic interpretation is forced:

- (31) Judith ate no sandwich
- (32) Judith ate no sandwich in an hour
- (33) For no sandwich x did (Judith) eat x in an hour
- (34) $[\text{No } x: \text{sandwich}(x)] (\exists e) \text{ eat}(\text{Judith}, x, e) \ \& \ \text{in an hour}(\pi(e), \tau(e))$

Groups behave like individuals for the purpose of this generalization:

- (35) Four men carried three pianos downstairs in an hour
- (36) The water boiled for five minutes
- (37) The water boiled in five minutes
- (38) Water boiled for five minutes
- (39) Water boiled in five minutes

V. Stage and Individual

Individual-level predicates are taken also to have E-positions, in view of, e.g., the productivity of gerunds, the fact that they can be used with predicates of duration, and so forth. The distinction is between events and temporary states, on the one hand, and states of long duration or essential states (no matter how brief) on the other. The distinction is not in general contextual. Observe first that simple activity predicates double as dispositional (as if there were a functional head)

- (40) Water boils
- (41) If x is water, then x is disposed to boil

Diesing (1992) takes predicates like *nervous* and *sick* to be transmutable from individual to stage and from stage to individual, respectively. But *nervous* is ambiguous between (a) a-jangle with nerves and (b) of a nervous disposition. hence *Basenjis are nervous* appears to be individual-level, because it must (in English) be generic.

Conversely, despite the oddity of the following, *sick* is only stage-level: the oddity is owing to the fact that we draw to the generic interpretation.

- (42) There are children with red rashes sick
- (43) Children with red rashes are sick
- (44) If x is a child, and e is an event of x 's having a red rash, then e is accompanied by an e' which is a situation of x 's being sick
- (45) there are children with pink bedrooms sick

VI. Visibility of *teli* in purpose clauses

Bach (1982) showed that purpose clauses are licensed by what he called "resultant states". We can formulate this condition as in Whelpton (1995); but then argue also that it must be linguistically represented, not just inferable:

- (46) I bought bones [to give to the dog]
- (47) I bought bones {O [PRO to give t to the dog]}
- (48) $LxLeLP C(x, e, P)$
- (49) e is a state that is (or is intended to be) causally efficacious in bringing it about that x has P
- (50) The sign hung in the window [for people to read]
- (51) John pushed the cart along the road [for the crowd to see]
- (52) *I wiped the table [to impress the guests with]
- (53) I wiped the table clean/free of dirt [to impress the guests with]
- (54) *They deprived the prisoner of food [to starve]
- (55) *The bowler hit the wicket [to knock down]
- (56) *I pounded the meat [to improve the taste of]
- (57) I pounded the meat [to fit into the pan]
- (58) I pounded the meat tender [to improve the taste of]

Conclusion: the distinction between events that are given directly by the predicates and those that are to be invoked for further processes must be drawn at the level of semantic representation and lexical knowledge: context and common knowledge cannot override it.

Notas

- * Reproduzimos o guião de apoio à Conferência distribuído pelo autor.